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Leicester, Mass.
Feb. 9. 1866

Dear friend Webb,

It is long, altogether too long, since I wrote to you,– and even now must write a rapid and probably disjointed kind of epistle. I do not exactly know when my last letter to you was written,– but I suppose you got it while at Cork. I infer you are at home again, from your hand-writing on a newspaper-envelope (the London Weekly Despatch) wh. envelope was one stamped with your business title,– from which my inference was that you were in Dublin. I hope a letter may be on the way to me telling how you are, & telling too of a good improvement in yr. health. I have been in Boston a good deal since January 1st, preparing to close my official connexion & Membership with the old Anti-Slavery Society, &c. It remained doubtful, up to the time of the vote, whether the Society would be continued or not. It was well understood that a majority of the Board of Managers were in favor of dissolving the Society. Only 2 or 3, in the meeting of the Managers, voted against it,– of whom W. Phillips was one. But he told Mr. Garrison and Mr. Yerrinton he should make no special opposition to the dissolution. He did however– coming forward the moment Mr. Garrison had finished reading his address, to say that the Society would not be dissolved, if his [illegible] best efforts to prevent it could be of any avail. Of course those of us, who favored the dissolution, could not well object to others associating under the name of Anti Slavery, if they wished to do so; and Phillips, having changed his mind, & there being a rally of fresh comers, many of whom had never ~~[illegible] of ever~~ declaring themselves members of the Society before, but taking the liberty to vote under the liberal ruling of the Chair (E. Quincy), the vote was carried against dissolving the Society, by about 2 to 1. There was no announcement of the numbers voting, and no count declared. I judged about 50 votes to dissolve - perhaps twice that number against it. - You may get a "Standard" having an extended report of the meeting in it, and so will get doubtless all the particulars. I haven't yet seen the number which was to contain the Report. Some unpleasant things transpired at the meeting, - such as Phillips's asserting that "all the efforts that Mr. Garrison, & those who acted with him at the New York meeting last May, had put forth ~~done~~, since that time, to further the cause of freedom in the Country, could be counted on the fingers of one hand", - a most needless, & wanton remark for any one to make on such an occasion, even had it been true. It was replied to, & shown to be as far from the fact, as from courteousness. - I only quote the language of his especial friends, and immediate associates, when I say that a great

P.S. I had nearly forgotten to say that last week I made up a parcel of "Liberators" to complete, or help complete your file. I have waited long, & applied in vain, to get the numbers wanting of the "Standard". I sent by one of Warren & Co's ships, to care of S.R. Graves, Liverpool - a small parcel. -

change has come over Phillips latterly. Stephen S. Foster himself it was who said to me, during the late meetings, — "Phillips has changed very much of late, — Abby [Mrs. Foster] notices it, as well as I. Formerly he was, as we thought, much too acquiescent — now he goes to the opposite extreme". I believe I quote his very words. — I do not know what occurred to change his mind as to the dissolving the Society; but he withstood it, as if the life of all that ~~was~~ is precious was depending on the result. For myself, I have had one opinion, & one faith, about it, for nearly a year; it ~~was~~ was, and is, that when the people of this Country should agree to place in their Constitution the Abolition of Slavery and its Prohibition hereafter, thus rendering it illegal to hold a slave, & taking from that wicked & oppressive relation all sanction, direct & indirect, of law & Constitution, that it would not only be right & suitable for the American AntiSlavery Society & its auxiliaries to dissolve, but their duty to do so, — the anti-Slavery work proper being accomplished, antislavery principles being recognized, and incorporated into the law of the land; & on the ground that it is incumbent on us, as abolitionists, to recognize in such respectful way the National Act, and accept it in its full, & obvious meaning & intent; & because, to continue our association, in such circumstances, is to reject the National act as hollow, and ineffective.

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Such ground I shall not, - cannot take - f
one. I rejoice and give thanks for the Nationa
Act, abhorring & repudiating Slavery, - shall acc
it to the full, and rejoice that, in future, we must
longer work for Slaves, but for freed men, s
(I trust) to become in all respects, the possess
of every right of humanity upon our Soil. -
Of course, there is something trying in breaking up
associations & relations which have subsisted so long,
so pleasantly, & so usefully (as we think), - but
abiding satisfaction & consolation is ours that we ha
succeeded, in this greatest work of our Nation & gen
thro' the power of the truth, & the madness & wicked
of our opponents. Now the Freedmen's Aid
looms up large - "not "cheap soup & primers", as W.
called it, - but a combined, concentrated effort of the
Conscience & worth of the Nation to lift up the em
pated man, and secure for him all his rights
a work which is by no means confined to, and
limited by, the "F. A." organization, but is recog
for duty, necessity, & the only honest policy, by a
that is good and true in the land.

My family are pretty well - only my wife & oldest dau
(Adeline) now at home with me, with an occasional frie
visiting us. Edwd my oldest son is at Washington still, in the N
Department, very well - Russell in business life in Boston - & Be
at school at Lexington, where Dr Dio Lewis & Theodore D. Weld
the Chief teachers. Very sincere regards to all your family, including
Yours to the end, faithfully, Saml. May

I have sent you nos. of newspapers lately; and enclose stamps for postage of this. (over)